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TECHNICAL NOTE

FOREST INSECTS AND DISEASES IN CAPE BRETON HIGHLANDS NATIONAL PARK IN 1989

Personnel of the Forest Insect and Disease Survey regularly monitor national parks for forest insect and disease conditions. Some of the conditions encountered in Cape Breton Highlands National Park in 1989 are briefly discussed below.

Wind damage - heavy southeasterly winds in mid-June disfigured and tattered hardwood foliage over large areas of Inverness and Victoria counties. In the Park, damage was observed on sugar maple, red maple, white birch, and beech. The extent of the problem was highly visible at the Petit Etang Park entrance where 100% of sugar maple and 60% of white birch leaves were damaged. Elsewhere, damage ranged from light to severe, with severe damage observed on sugar maple at Pleasant Bay, Pillar Rock, and Black Brook. Damage was moderate on white birch at Pillar Rock and light on the maples, birch, and beech at North Aspy River, Fox Back Lake, and Franey Mountain.

Anthracnose, a fungus which causes irregularly-shaped reddish-brown patches on leaves, was present on many of the wind-damaged sugar maple leaves and was a secondary cause of some of the severe browning observed. This condition was found at moderate levels on beech at Pleasant Bay and was also present on sugar maple at Petit Etang.

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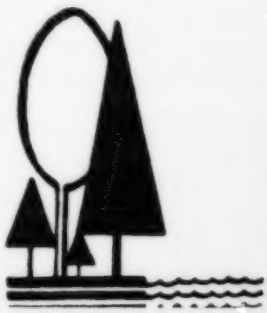

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Gypsy moth is a major pest of forest and shade trees in many parts of the northeastern United States, southern Ontario, and southern Quebec. The hairy larvae can grow to 6 cm in length and are easily reccognized by the five pairs of blue and six pairs of red dots along their back. This insect has recently become established in western Nova Scotia. Thirteen gypsy moth pheromone traps were placed by Parks personnel in 1989, as part of the province-wide gypsy moth monitoring program. Eleven traps were assessed but only one moth was caught, this at the Petit Etang entrance. This is the first positive catch in four years. All Park visitors who find suspected gypsy moths should report them to Park personnel.

Spruce budworm caused widespread devastation to the coniferous forests in the Park during the 1970s and early 1980s. No damage has been reported in the Park since 1987, and this trend continued in 1989.

Birch skeletonizer, a tiny insect, causes late summer browning of birch foliage and premature leaf drop. Though the scorched appearance is noteworthy, trees are not seriously affected unless high populations persist for several years. The highest level of damage observed was southwest of Neils Harbour, where 90% of the leaves were skeletonized. At Fox Lake, McIntosh Brook, MacKenzie Point, Fishing Cove Brook, and Broad Cove damage ranged from trace to light.

Balsam twig aphid causes stunting and curling of current year balsam fir shoots. Damage was at trace levels throughout the Park with no more than 4% of the shoots damaged at any one location.

Balsam woolly adelgid feed on cell sap beneath the bark on all parts of balsam fir from the root collar to the crown. Damage was confined to the branch tips of the trees in the Park with no stem attack observed and was only trace to light throughout the Park in 1989. The highest injury occurred at French Lake, where light attack was found on all of the trees checked, and at Cheticamp Flowage, where trace attack was found on 20% of the trees.

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